

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 remain pending in this application. Claims 1, 5, and 8 are independent. In light of the amendments and remarks made herein, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-7, 11, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph; and rejected claims 8-10 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Owa et al. (USP 6,348,971). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

In response to the Examiner's rejection of claims 1-7, 11, and 13, by this Amendment, Applicant has amended the claims to more appropriately recite the present invention. Specifically, Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 5 to recite, *inter alia*, that print data, which represents at least one of the images and characters to be printed, is applied to each of the plurality of printers that are capable of printing as determined by the print processing capability detection unit. Based upon this amendment, it is respectfully requested that the outstanding rejection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 8-10 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Owa et al. Specifically, the

Examiner asserts that Owa et al. teaches the overall workload determining unit for determining overall workload of printing to be performed using the plurality of printers, citing to col. 14, lines 9-13, and col. 15, lines 8-14, and a printer control unit, citing to col. 8, lines 44-48. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's characterization of this reference.

The disclosure of Owa et al. is directed to a printer selection device that selects an optimum printer for printing a document based on user information indicating such conditions as print commands and specifications, and based upon printer information concerning print environments of the printers and causes the optimum printer to print the document (Abstract).

Specifically, at col. 10, lines 23-34, Owa et al. discloses as follows:

As shown in FIG. 9a, the printer state management table 51 records print technology, printable color mode, print resolutions print speed, fed paper size, installed font type, option availability, etc., for each of the printers (PRNs) connected to the communication network 4. The print technology includes electrophotography (laser), ink jet, thermal transfer, impact dot matrix, sublimation, etc. Color or monochrome print is indicated under the column "COLOR" as the printable color mode in FIG. 9. The specifications and functions of the printers connected to the network can be known by looking up in the printer state management table 51.

In contrast, the present invention as set forth in claim 8 recites, *inter alia*, a multiple-printer control apparatus for

controlling a plurality of printers comprising an overall workload determining unit for determining overall workload including the quantity of printing to be performed using the plurality of printers and a printer control unit for allocating, based on the determined print processing capabilities of each of the plurality of printers and on the determined overall workload, the printing to be performed at each of the plurality of printers. While Owa et al. may disclose matching user information with the information stored in the printer state management table, there is no teaching or suggestion in Owa et al. that is directed to an overall workload determining unit for determining overall workload including the quantity of printing to be performed using the plurality of printers. Further, there is no teaching or suggestion in Owa et al. that is directed to a printer control unit for allocating, based on the determined print processing capabilities of each of the plurality of printers, and on the determined overall workload, the printing to be performed at each of the plurality of printers. As Owa et al. fails to teach or suggest all of the claimed elements, it is respectfully submitted that claim 8 is not anticipated by Owa et al.

It is respectfully submitted that claims 9-10 and 12 are allowable for the reasons set forth above with regard to claim 8 at least based upon their dependency on claim 8.

Conclusion

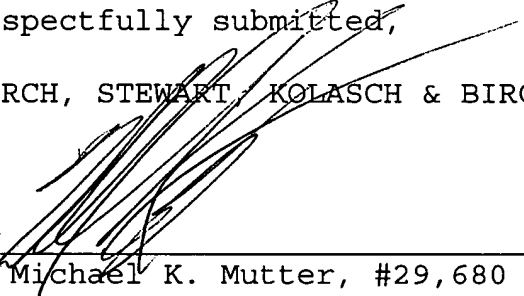
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Catherine M. Voisinet (Reg. No. 52,327) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.


If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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